



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 2024

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STARTING ITS SECOND DECADE, ROC THE FUTURE ALLIANCE CELEBRATES 11 YEARS OF IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR ROCHESTER'S CHILDREN

Annual Event Highlights 'State of Our Children' Report Card and Collaborative Actions

ROCHESTER, NY – On Friday, January 19, **ROC the Future Alliance** (RTFA) hosts its 11th annual ticketed luncheon celebration as Rochester's collective educational impact initiative, and releases its annual **State of Our Children Report Card**. The event takes place from 11:30 am-1:30 pm at ARTISANworks (565 Blossom Rd., Rochester). Tickets are available through Friday, January 12 at: <http://tinyurl.com/4y9j266u>.

RTFA brings together a coalition of more than 60 systems partners and parents working toward a shared vision of academic success for every child regardless of their situation.

In choosing this year's theme –'**Seeding Youth Success**' – ROC the Future Executive Director Brian Lewis notes that "when we make investments in our youth and ensure that they have supportive environments, they can learn and grow."

"This event also provides us an opportunity to acknowledge the powerful collective efforts happening across our alliance and in our community" says Lewis, "to ensure every child in Rochester is school ready, supported and successful from cradle to career."

This year's annual 'State of Our Children' Report Card presentation continues RTFA's data-driven measurement of success, a public accountability to the greater community by measuring and reporting key indicators. Research and information gleaned from the community help better understand and identify the root causes of challenges.

Focusing on the following four areas, the report card shares multiple outcomes, including:

- **Early Childhood:** After launching in 2022 and completing a one-year planning phase, the Whole Child Initiative (WCI) transitioned to implementation mode in March of 2023 with two key community engagement activities: Parent Cafés and System Support Mapping.
- **High School Outcomes:** Inspired by the Be Strong Families Parent Café model—which RTFA's Whole Child Initiative rolled out in 2023—East EPO's (Educational Partnership Organization) Community Cafés now serve as a sanctuary for fostering genuine connections among scholars, families, staff, and community partners.
- **Parent/Family Partnerships:** In 2023, RTFA established Parent/Family Partner Cornerstones to fortify its commitment to sharing power with parents.
- **Youth Leadership and Engagement:** Last April, the "Youth United: Building a Better Rochester" collaboration brought more than 140 youth and chaperones together for a day-long summit aimed at teaching teens how to take direct action to improve their community.

Event Keynote Speaker Dr. April Aycock, Director of Monroe County Office of Mental Health, will discuss mental health as it relates to seeding youth success. “When children have a collective positive community support system,” she says, “hopes and dreams for a better future do not have to be deferred.”

Emceed by RTFA parent Jasmin Vega and Michelle Shafer (Sr. Relationship Mgr, Community Impact and Foundation, ESL Federal Credit Union), the event agenda is as follows:

- 11:30 am: Registration and buffet lunch; music by World of Inquiry School #58 band
- 12:00 pm: Introductions by event emcees Jasmin Vega (RTFA parent) and Michelle Shafer (Sr. Relationship Manager, Community Impact and Foundation, ESL Federal Credit Union)
- 12:05 pm: Short performance by Garth Fagan Dance Student Ensemble
- 12:15: “Vision Forward” welcome by Dr. Lorna Washington, RTFA Chair
- 12:20 pm: Remarks by NYS Senator Samra Brouk, Chair of the Committee on Mental Health; and Isaiah Santiago, Rochester City School District Board Commissioner
- 12:30 pm: Keynote Address by Dr. April Aycock, Ed.D, LMHC, Master-CASAC
- 12:40 pm: Report Card Presentation
- 1:00 pm: Awards Presentation
 - **Jacque Cady Annual Advocacy for Children Award** recognizes an individual for extraordinary accomplishment in advancing public policy or funding decisions for the benefit of our community’s children.
 - **Parent Leader Award** recognizes parents who have exhibited exemplary leadership by engaging and partnering with other parents to support the success of the community’s children and families.
 - **Systems Change Award** (formerly Organizational Partner Award) recognizes an organization that demonstrates exemplary leadership working with other organizations in collective impact and collaboration in support of ROC the Future’s mission to improve cradle-to-career outcomes for Rochester’s children.
 - **Youth Leadership Award** (NEW!) recognizes a young leader who inspires other youth to use their voice—to make a change in the Rochester community—in support of ROC the Future Alliance’s mission.
- 1:20 pm: Closing remarks by RTFA’s Executive Director Brian Lewis

Noting the importance of this event, Lewis says it “provides a chance to highlight where and how we can lean in and collaborate more effectively to change systems and improve education outcomes, setting youth and families on the path to upward mobility.”

About ROC the Future Alliance:

ROC the Future Alliance is a community-wide, childhood education alliance in the Rochester community. Our collective impact initiative brings together a coalition of partners and parents working towards a shared vision of academic and social-emotional success for every child. We recognize that no one individual or business can accomplish significant change alone—which is why our funders, providers, staff members and parent/family partners work toward a common goal. Since its founding, ROC the Future Alliance has championed a vision that *Every Child is School Ready, Supported, Successful, and College and Career Ready*. www.rocthefuture.org.

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